

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A scramble/descramble apparatus that, when applying a partial-viewing-capable scrambling to video contents, allows a distributor to apply the scrambling, or to apply a scrambling with a strength that differs from the one at the time of the encoding. The scramble/descramble apparatus is implemented by encrypting a part of a video data portion of the encoded video contents. A contents-scrambling function in the above configuration performs correct video reproduction for a terminal that has the encryption key. Meanwhile, at a terminal that has no encryption key, the function allows the viewing (i.e., partial viewing) of a part of the video contents, or the viewing of video contents whose picture-quality has been degraded. At this time, applying the scrambling can be carried out after the video has been encoded. Accordingly, an encoding-performing party and a scrambling-performing party can be mutually different parties.